

# B2G SA: national opportunity rather than just a business talk shop

We sat down with Mxolisi Mgojo, co-chair of B2G SA, to break down why this global business forum is not just for CEOs and politicians – it is a game changer for ordinary South Africans.

**Sowetan:** Mr Mgojo, let us start simple. What is B2G, and why should the average South African care?

**Mgojo:** Good question! The B2G is a global business engagement group that speaks directly to the G20, the world's 20 biggest economies. The G20 is like the world's most powerful cabinet meeting, where leaders from 20 major economies make decisions about money, jobs and global rules that end up affecting our daily work and lives.

But here is the thing: SA is the first African country to host the G20 and the B2G. That means we have a rare chance to shape policy recommendations that affect jobs, trade and opportunities – not just for us, but for the whole continent.

So why should you care? Because the decisions made here trickle down to our daily lives, whether it is cheaper goods, jobs or skills training for your kids.

**Sowetan:** You talk about jobs and skills, why is this such a big focus for B2G SA?

**Mgojo:** Look at the numbers: by 2050, one in four workers globally will be African. But right now, half of our youth are unemployed. That is a crisis, but also an opportunity.

Our Employment and Education Task Force is tackling the jobs crisis head-on by focusing on policy recommendations that will result in upskilling workers for growing industries like green energy, technology and manufacturing, ensuring they are ready for the jobs of tomorrow.

We are also pushing to make sure young people do not just leave school with degrees but with real, marketable skills that employers actually need. And because small businesses are the backbone of our economy, we are advocating for policy recommendations that help them grow and create more jobs. This is not just about policy papers, it is about real opportunities for ordinary Africans to build better lives.

**Sowetan:** We are hearing a lot about the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). How does that help ordinary people?

**Mgojo:** Imagine you're a small business owner in Soweto. Right now, selling to Nigeria or Kenya is expensive and complicated

because of tariffs, delays, red tape. The AfCFTA is supposed to change that, creating a single African market worth \$3.4-trillion.

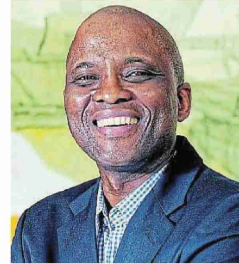
Right now, the AfCFTA is stuck in "potential" mode, but our Trade and Investment Task Force is working to change that by pushing for practical solutions. We are working on recommendations that will cut border delays and red tape so goods can move faster across the continent, boost digital trade to help even informal traders and small businesses sell beyond their local markets, and link African industries to create real, sustainable jobs.

**Sowetan:** You have a task force on energy too. With loadshedding, what's the plan?

**Mgojo:** The Energy Transition Task Force is not just about fixing loadshedding, though that remains critical, but about building an energy system that truly works for everyone.

Yes, we absolutely need to keep the lights on, but we also need to train workers for the jobs of the future in solar, wind and green hydrogen, ensuring they have the skills to thrive in a changing energy landscape.

At the same time, we must make energy more affordable so



**Mxolisi Mgojo**

businesses, especially small and medium enterprises, can grow and compete. And crucially, we have to balance sustainability with affordability, because no worker should ever have to choose between putting food on the table and protecting the environment we all share. This is about creating an energy future that powers both our economy and our communities.

This is not just theory. India used its B2G presidency to roll out digital payment systems that helped street vendors go cashless. We can do the same, leapfrog old problems with smart solutions.

**Sowetan:** What is your biggest worry – and biggest hope?

**Mgojo:** My worry? That we squander the B2G SA moment.

Africa's long-promised future still hasn't arrived.

My hope? That this B2G presidency shifts the narrative. We are not just asking for a seat at the table, we are bringing solutions.

If we get this right, our children could grow up to land a good job in one of Africa's booming tech hubs, build a business that trades effortlessly across the continent without all the red tape and develop skills that make them competitive on the global stage, not just in their own neighbourhood.

This is not just wishful thinking – it is the future we are working to create through practical solutions that connect African talent with real opportunities. The choices we make today will determine whether our children inherit a continent of struggle or one of genuine possibility.

**Sowetan:** What can ordinary South Africans do?

**Mgojo:** Hold us accountable! B2G SA is not some distant meeting. It is about our livelihoods. Ask: "Where are the jobs?" Demand: "Why is trade still so hard?" Push for skills that matter.

This is Africa's time, but only if we act like it.